

Behavioral Approaches to Categorization

1. Definitional approach
2. Prototype approach
3. Exemplar approach

Definitional Approach

Definitional approach: determine category membership based on whether an item meets the definition of the category

Definitional Approach

- *What is the defining feature of fruit?*
 - contains seeds?



Definitional Approach

- ▶ *What is the defining feature of a bachelor?*

Definitional Approach

- unmarried + human + male?
- *What is the defining feature of a bachelor?*

Definitional Approach

- unmarried + human + male?
- *What is the defining feature of a bachelor?*

Jack is an unmarried male, but has been living with his girlfriend for ten years. Their relationship is stable and happy.

Charles is an unmarried male who does not have a partner. But Charles is a monk living in a monastery.

Zachary is an unmarried male, but he is two years old.

Frank is a married male, but has not seen his wife in many years. He dates often, hoping to find a new partner.

Definitional Approach

- ▶ **Problem #1:** some categories do not readily lend themselves to feature analysis

Definitional Approach

- ▶ Problem #1: some categories do not readily lend themselves to feature analysis

“I shall not today attempt to further define [pornography] ... but I know it when I see it...” Justice Potter Stewart



Definitional Approach

- ▶ **Problem #2:** a violation of defining features does not change the category

Definitional Approach

- ▶ Problem #2: a violation of defining features does not change the category

Birds can fly

